

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: Thursday,
October 9, 1947 (R)

SUBJECT:

Discussion prior to talks with the British on the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.

PARTICIPANTS:

Mr. Henderson, NEA; Mr. Hickerson, EUR; Mr. Kannan, S/P; General Norstad; General Gruenther; Admiral Sherman; Mr. Wailles, BC; Mr. Hare, SOA.

COPIES TO:

Mr. Henderson, NEA; Mr. Hickerson, EUR; General Norstad, General Gruenther, Admiral Sherman.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

W 01 FYR

DATE 5/25/82

RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE

TS AUTH. REASON(S)

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐DECLASSIFIED ☒ RELEASABLE ☒RELEASE DENIED ☐

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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The above-mentioned persons met on October 9 for preparatory discussion regarding prospective talks with the British on the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, and the following represents the consensus of their opinions:

1. It is very important that "British uniforms" should be kept in Greece. Realizing the difficulties under which the British Government labors in this matter, however, we should not press for a binding agreement for the retention of British troops in Greece, but should make it clear to the British that we are proceeding on the assumption that their troops will in fact be retained.

2. The use of American troops in Greece would present virtually insuperable obstacles.

3. The decision taken in August, 1946, regarding the determination of the United States to resist overt Soviet aggression against Turkey should apply with equal force to the Eastern Mediterranean, including specifically Italy, Greece, and Iran, as well as Turkey. The British should be informed to that effect on the understanding that such represents the current thinking of our negotiators but not accepted policy.

4. The British should be told that we intend seeing the Greek affair through, and that we will recommend that we do not pull out on July 1, 1948.

5. As matters now stand the British have the only military bases

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bases in the Middle East. We have none and should not take steps to acquire any. This does not exclude the possibility, however, that we might eventually accept the responsibility for establishing bases in the area in the event that Soviet aggression should reach a point where such action on our part would be clearly welcomed by the countries of the Middle East.

6. We should use diplomatic influence with the Egyptians in order to induce them to come to an agreement with the British by virtue of which, assuming that the British consent to evacuate Suez, arrangement would be made for re-occupation of the Suez base area in an emergency. At the same time, we might find it advisable to intimate to the British our feeling that it would be unwise to insist on conclusion of a treaty as a quid pro quo for evacuation; the more logical sequence would seem to be to decide on evacuation first, in order to clear the air, and then proceed to negotiate a new treaty.

7. Our acceptance of the apparent inevitability of the British evacuation of Suez does not apply to the Sudan.

8. The negative response which we have hitherto made to the Egyptians in respect of the furnishing of military assistance to Egypt might be replaced by an indication of a more cooperative attitude on our part as a means of reinforcing our diplomatic representations to the Egyptians, with a view to inducing them to become more receptive to the idea of a mutual assistance pact with the British.

9. Greater attention should be directed to the sheikdoms, sultanates, etc. in Southeastern Arabia, south of the Persian Gulf, where oil development might be tied up with the installation of "ghost" airfields, which would provide defense in depth and at the same time be accessible by sea. A "loosening up" by the British in respect of this area would be welcome.

10. Cyrenica is a strategically key area in the Mediterranean, and the building up of a British base there would be highly desirable, particularly in the light of prospective British evacuation of Suez. This would necessitate the evolving of some political arrangement which would make it possible for the British to remain in that area. The disposition of Tripolitania, however, remains an open question.

11. The cession of Eritria to Ethiopia and the Sudan, and the amalgamation of British and Italian Somaliland under a single British trusteeship merits consideration, but decision in this respect was reserved, having particularly in mind possible reaction in Italy. It was generally agreed, however, that we

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suggest to the British that they take a more kindly view of the Italians generally. It was further agreed that the questions of the various Italian colonies should be treated by individual colonies, and not as a whole.

12. The effective use of Trans-Jordan as a base will be vitally affected by its accessibility to the Mediterranean littoral via Palestine. This, in turn, makes of particular importance such final decisions as may be made regarding the allocations of territory to the Arabs and Jews under the proposed partition plan.

13. Any plan for Palestine which might give the Russians a foot in the door in that area would be dangerous and should be avoided.

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SOA: Raymond A. Hare: mme - 10-15-47